



Kevin Thom  
Sheriff

# **Rapid City Police Department Pennington County Sheriff's Office**

## **"Progress Through Cooperation"**

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**300 Kansas City St., Rapid City, SD 57701**



Karl Jegeris  
Chief of Police

December 8, 2016

President Troy "Scott" Weston  
Oglala Sioux Tribe  
PO Box 2070  
Pine Ridge, SD 57770

Dear President Weston,

We'd like to congratulate you on your election and wish you well as you lead the Oglala Sioux Tribe into the future.

Collectively, we have decades of experience in South Dakota law enforcement, which includes extensive collaboration with Tribal Law Enforcement. We've attached a list of recent tribal partnerships that we have initiated and/or engaged in. We provide this list to illustrate the great effort that has taken place to bridge the Rapid City-Pennington County Community with the Pine Ridge Community, in the interest of Public Safety.

Unfortunately the results of our efforts don't equate to substantial results in terms of ensuring public safety. The reason for this can primarily be attributed to jurisdictional complications that prevent our Criminal Justice Systems from holding offenders accountable for criminal behavior. By doing so, we have unintentionally delayed interventions that are needed to assist offenders to address the core issues related to their criminal behavior, which often times is substance abuse addiction. Crime, and in particular violent crime, has increased significantly, and criminal suspects have learned how to manipulate jurisdictional complications; while they elude arrests, often times they are continuing to engage in further criminal activity. Additionally, the presence and use of methamphetamine appear to be on the rise and out of control in our area. These are clear indicators this condition is in need of immediate remediation.

We've also attached a recent publication regarding the July shooting death of Te'Ca Clifford to provide an unfortunate and tragic illustration of the results of jurisdictional complications.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS

We respect your Tribal Sovereignty, but believe there may be a way to collaboratively improve public safety for our community, while exercising sovereignty. It is our request that you share this information with the Law and Order Committee, and place us on the agenda for an upcoming Committee meeting to discuss jurisdictional collaboration further. It is our hope to improve public safety by creating a stronger foundation for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kl Jegeris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Karl Jegeris  
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Thom', with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Kevin Thom  
Pennington County Sheriff

cc: Chief of Police Harry Martinez, OST DPS

Enclosures: Tribal Partnerships  
Chief Jegeris publication

### **Tribal Partnerships**

- Routine sharing of law enforcement information with Tribal law enforcement agencies
- Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) – Assist with analysis of digital evidence for Federal Cases off the reservations.
- Internet safety talks provided to kids at schools on Pine Ridge and Rosebud
- ICAC related training for law enforcement on Pine Ridge and Rosebud
- Western South Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force has provided training on Pine Ridge and Rosebud. Tribal members participate in the Task Force.
- FBI Safe Trails Task Force interaction with Rapid City/Pennington County/DCI Unified Narcotics Enforcement Team (UNET) work with Tribal/BIA law enforcement to combat drug trafficking on and off the reservations.
- United States Marshalls Service Fugitive Task Force is a combined team of USMS and Pennington County Sheriff's Office working with Tribal/BIA law enforcement to apprehend dangerous felons.
- Deputies along with Search & Rescue response for search and ultimately assisted in recovery of 3 young men who died in a vehicle crash
- Training of Tribal Correctional Officers from Rosebud
- Law Enforcement Training hosted in Rapid City and attended by Tribal Officers
  - Vehicle crash Investigations
- Fire Department, Rapid City Police Department & Sheriff's Office Water Rescue Team participated in the rescue of a family trapped on a vehicle in flood waters on Pine Ridge.
- Critical Incident Debriefs officers investigating child deaths or fatality vehicle crashes. Also provide staff Psychologist to assist Tribal Officers that have been involved in on duty use of force situations.
  - Rosebud
  - Pine Ridge
- Provided Meth Awareness Training to Pine Ridge Group in Rapid City, States Attorney & UNET
- Pine Ridge requested Rapid City/Pennington County Special Response Team for incident where OST Officer was shot at, but could not respond due to jurisdictional barriers
- Lakota Nation Invitational joint working relationship with RCPD/PCSO/BIA and Tribal law enforcement.
- MacArthur Foundation Safety & Justice Challenge to reduce local jail populations. Several of the initiatives are specific to the Native American population.
  - This included team member visits to Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Cheyenne River.
- Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is based in Rapid City and operated by Children's Home Society which partners for funding with the Rapid City Police Department and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. The CAC conducts forensic interviews of children that are victims of physical and/or sexual abuse. Approximately 70 to 80 Native American children are served each year as the result of criminal investigations on the reservations in western South Dakota.

# Murder of 13-year-old Te'ca Lynn Clifford was avoidable - RCPD Chief of Police Karl Jegeris



RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2016 1,126 Reads

## FUNERAL SET FOR 13-YEAR-OLD TE'CA CLIFFORD, WHO WAS MURDERED ON PINE RIDGE INDIAN RESERVATION

BY LEVI RICKERT | CURRENTS | 26 JUL 2016



Te'Ca Clifford

The July 26th headline from Native News Online

It shuddered my soul in July when I read the obituary which followed the shooting death of a girl who had just turned 13 years old in Pine Ridge Village. It's been on my mind ever since. I can't get over how tragic this situation is.

It might be because I have a 13-year-old myself, and couldn't imagine such devastation occurring to any family in our community. Maybe it's because I was a School Liaison Officer earlier in my career at West Middle School and worked closely with kids from this age group for years. Maybe it is because I was

deeply involved in the investigation when one of my 15-year-old students, Cameron Ebel, was beaten to death on his front doorstep on Hall Street.

I think all of these reasons contribute, but there is a clear reason I can't get this off my mind. It is because I know this violent death was clearly avoidable.

The alleged shooter in this incident has had a felony warrant from our jurisdiction since last December. It stemmed from a Rapid City Police Department arrest where he was in possession of meth amongst other things. Unfortunately, for at least the last hundred years, the Tribal, state, and local criminal justice system are structured in a manner that inhibits collaboration in obtaining and trying wanted felons in each other's jurisdiction.

This has resulted in the reservation being considered a “safe-haven” for criminals to avoid accountability for their actions. While they are avoiding accountability, they are also avoiding an opportunity to address the root cause of their criminal behavior, which often times is substance abuse.

If we would have had the opportunity to collaborate with Tribal officials, we may have been able to save two lives from senseless tragedy. The shooter could have been taken into custody and received the rehabilitative treatment services he so badly needed. At this point, our taxpayers wouldn't be on the hook for the potential lengthy federal prison term that is likely. Most importantly, Te'ca would still be with her family.

There have been so many tragic deaths in Pine Ridge this year, more than I can remember during my career over the past two decades. Many of them are homicides, several involving a direct nexus to meth use. Recently the Tribal council passed a resolution to allow banishment of Tribal members involved in the underworld of meth. This is a short sighted solution that will simply displace crime and tragedy.

However, there lays a solution in where local and state jurisdiction can help recognize and exercise the sovereignty of our South Dakota tribal nations. I would encourage the soon-to-be-seated Tribal president and council to focus on crime reduction rather than crime displacement. It's as simple as establishing agreements to support cooperation amongst state and local jurisdictions. Law enforcement can only be effective when this type of support comes from top leadership.

A hundred years of division has been too long. Rapid City and Pine Ridge really are one community that happens to be 100 miles apart. I understand many may feel protective of Tribal land and jurisdiction, but the youth of our community deserve better. Te'ca Clifford deserved better. Difficult conversations need to be had. The only way for us to change history is to create a new history for the next generation by ensuring a safer community on our reservations. I am ready, willing, and able to help with this endeavor.

Finally, I offer my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Te'ca Clifford.

Chief Karl Jegeris can be contacted at [karl.jegeris@rcgov.org](mailto:karl.jegeris@rcgov.org)



Robin Wallen With your permission Sir, I would like to share this with a couple of FB groups that I'm in.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 12:23pm



Rapid City Police Department Of course.

Like · Reply · Commented on by Brendyn Medina (?) · November 29 at 1:04pm



Angela Bakke Hlavka Very well written and thoughtful, thank you for sharing. I hope this will create conversation and change that is so desperately needed.... especially for the welfare of our youth and breaking the cycle of drug addiction.

Like · Reply · Message · 6 · November 29 at 8:24am



ElaineRay Locke What I've always thought of as well. The jurisdiction boundaries between both communities need to be pulled down. Our Rez is a "hide out" place and it puts the younger ones in an unsafe environment here especially where meth is corrupt. IMO our tribal ... See More

Like · Reply · Message · 4 · November 29 at 9:41am



Susan Oconnell Thanks for sharing Karl...your thoughts share why you are doing what you do so well. I'm so glad I had the opportunity to know you during our time in Rapid and at Canyon Lake Elementary. Rapid City and the surrounding area are blessed to have you there!

Like · Reply · Message · 1 · November 29 at 2:00pm



Van Heflin I am so sorry for her family and all that suffered at the hands of horrid drug. I Salute you on your well written article but Officer I sincerely hope that this does not haunt you. You are not to blame but care so deeply when it's the laws and someone... See More

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 8:44am



Samantha Clark Not a chance. Police use excessive force on natives. Treat them like garbage. Like we're not humans. Seen it far to much in many different states.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 5:30pm



Mary Ann Perceovich Slanina Very well said.

Like · Reply · Message · 1 · November 29 at 2:10pm



Barb Millar Chief Jegeris, thank you. God Bless You.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 3:04pm



Joe Gray Well done Chief. I hope you've inspired our community to contact our elected officials, city, county, state, tribal, and federal, and urge them to enable closing the gap.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 8:46am



Shellbe Johnson Well said. 🙏

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 8:25am



Robin Wallen So perfectly well put, Chief Jegeris!

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 12:21pm



Brenda Thompson Amen!

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 1:45pm



Marilyn Bakke Thank you for those words.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 9:16am



Robin Wallen Thank you...

Like · Reply · Message · November 30 at 8:32am



Dottie McDaniels Sharp right on. very well said.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 11:03am



Michelle Macrander Well said

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 2:40pm



Arthur Short Bull Thank you for posting.

Like · Reply · Message · November 29 at 5:41pm

Write a comment...